Paralysing of operations at Borders

1102. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether operations on the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Burmese border were paralysed for three days in November, 1998;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the measures taken to ensure non-recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of reply to part (a).

Completion of LCA Project

1103. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that two US technology suppliers, M/s. General Electric and M/s. Lockheed Martin have pulled out of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA);

(b) if so, what has been the effect thereof on completion of LCA project;

(c) the present status of the project; and

(d) the details of production plan during the Ninth Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Consequent to the imposition of sanctions by the USA in May 1998, the licences given to M/s General Electric and M/s Lockheed Martin for transacting business with India were revoked by the US Government, resulting in discontinuance of cooperation in the specific areas of LCA programme.

(b) A national team has been constituted to overcome the impact of the sanctions on the schedule of LCA. All out efforts are being made to ensure induction of LCA into the Indian Air Force in the year 2003.

(c) The first indigenous LCA technology demonstrator (TD-I) is in advanced stage of qualification testing to ensure safety of flight and will be ready for its first flight by mid-1999. Second LCA (TD-2), which was rolled out in August 1998 is undergoing integration for its first flight targeted in October 1999. Structural assembly of fuselage and wing of first prototype LCA (PV-I) is in progress.

(d) Production plan of LCA has been prepared and is getting ready for approval.

Shelling by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir sector

1104. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of army personnel who either lost their lives or were injured in the past six months on account of shelling by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir sector;

(b) whether the casualties have gone up; and

(c) the counter-militancy drive taken to stop the cross border firing by Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) During the last six months (May to October 1998), 68 Security Personnel were killed and 273 were injured due to unprovoked Pakistani firing on the border in J & K.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Our troops respond appropriately to Pak unprovoked firings, taking due care that the incidents remain localised and no civilian casualty is caused and our response proves punitive and effective.

Alleged encroachment on defence land

1105. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Andhra Pradesh is in correspondence with